

# Chameleon spy

By GOR  
BROOK

Gehlen: Spy of the Century BY E. H. COOKRIDGE. Hodder, £3.75.

Spy Trade BY E. H. COOKRIDGE. Hodder, £2.50.

TURNING your coat in politics, like telling a lie in politics, makes sense only if you do it on the grand scale. Fouché, the French Minister and police chief, who served Bourbons, Jacobins, Bonapartists and Bourbons again, is the prime example of the 18th and early 19th centuries.

Richard Gehlen, the German intelligence mogul, who served in turn, and with equal enthusiasm, the Weimarites, Hitlerites, Americans and Bonnies (if one may coin the word) is one of the most dazzling exhibits of this chameleon breed in our own times.

In Gehlen: Spy of the Century, E. H. Cookridge traces the tale of this middle-class Prussian officer from his triumphs and tribulations as Hitler's wartime intelligence chief on the Russian front, to his coolly calculated surrender to the Americans in 1945 (with

all his archives), and his successes and failures as their servant and, finally, as a key official of the West German Government.

He emerges as a somewhat terrifying figure, a man of boundless energy and professional ambition, but seemingly without a soul as well as without a face (perhaps both are to be avoided in his calling).

He has been in on almost every bit of anti-Soviet skulduggery practised over the past 25 years, from the recruiting of the wartime Vlasov army of dissident Russians, to the building of the famous telephone-tapping tunnel under the boundaries of occupied Berlin—the tunnel that was finally “blown,” with much else, by the betrayals of our own spy traitor George Blake.

Mr. Cookridge has done a very competent job of reconstruction and has spiced the great mass of his familiar material with some new items culled from Gehlen's own war-

time files, now in Washington. But the book teeters uncertainly between the popular and the academic approach.

Many of the sections on Gehlen's individual exploits are too “bitty” for the serious reader, while all the German technical terms with which the text is peppered will daunt anyone reading just for interest.

There are also some unhappily worded side-swipes about Gehlen's own memoirs, which will be published next year in revised and expanded form in English. Whether justified or not, they make the author appear unsuitably polemical.

One wishes too that Mr. Cookridge had tackled the question: was all the money spent on Gehlen's spider web since the war (over 200 million dollars by the Americans alone) really worth it?

Mr. Cookridge's other new book, Spy Trade, suffers from none of the built-in imbalances of his Gehlen biography. It succeeds as just what the author aims at—a diverting pot-pourri of the classic cold war spy cases.